



State Center for Health and Environmental Statistics
P.O. Box 29538 • Raleigh, NC 27626-0538
919/733-4728

STATISTICAL PRIMER

No. 11

October 1993

EVALUATION OF HEALTH DATA FOR HISPANICS IN NORTH CAROLINA

by

Kathryn B. Surles

Recent studies^{1,2} examine the health status of Black and Native American residents of North Carolina. A similar study is desired for Hispanics, one of the fastest-growing segments of the state's population. However, data obstacles prevent such analysis at this time.

The intent of this report is to describe the data problems identified and to suggest some possible remedies. It is hoped that this background will prove useful to those concerned with the health and health care of Hispanics.

PROBLEMS WITH DATA SETS

Some data sets pertaining to the status of individuals do not include information on Hispanic origin. In North Carolina, for example, it is not included on the induced abortion report form, which is used to compute abortion measures as well as pregnancy rates. Although the communicable disease report card includes Hispanic origin (yes/no) since 1987, the variable has not been included on data files routinely acquired by the State Center.

Among data files of the N.C. Division of Social Services, Hispanic origin (yes/no) is included on these: food stamps, financial eligibility (Medicaid, AFDC, etc.), nonfinancial services (foster care, day care, etc.), and aging. Neither race nor Hispanic origin is collected on claims files.

Race and Hispanic origin also are not included on hospital discharge records collected by the N.C. Medical Database Commission. Hispanic origin (yes/no) is collected by the state's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System and Youth Risk Behavior Survey but not by other health-related surveys conducted in recent years. In all survey efforts, Hispanics must be oversampled to obtain stable estimates.

